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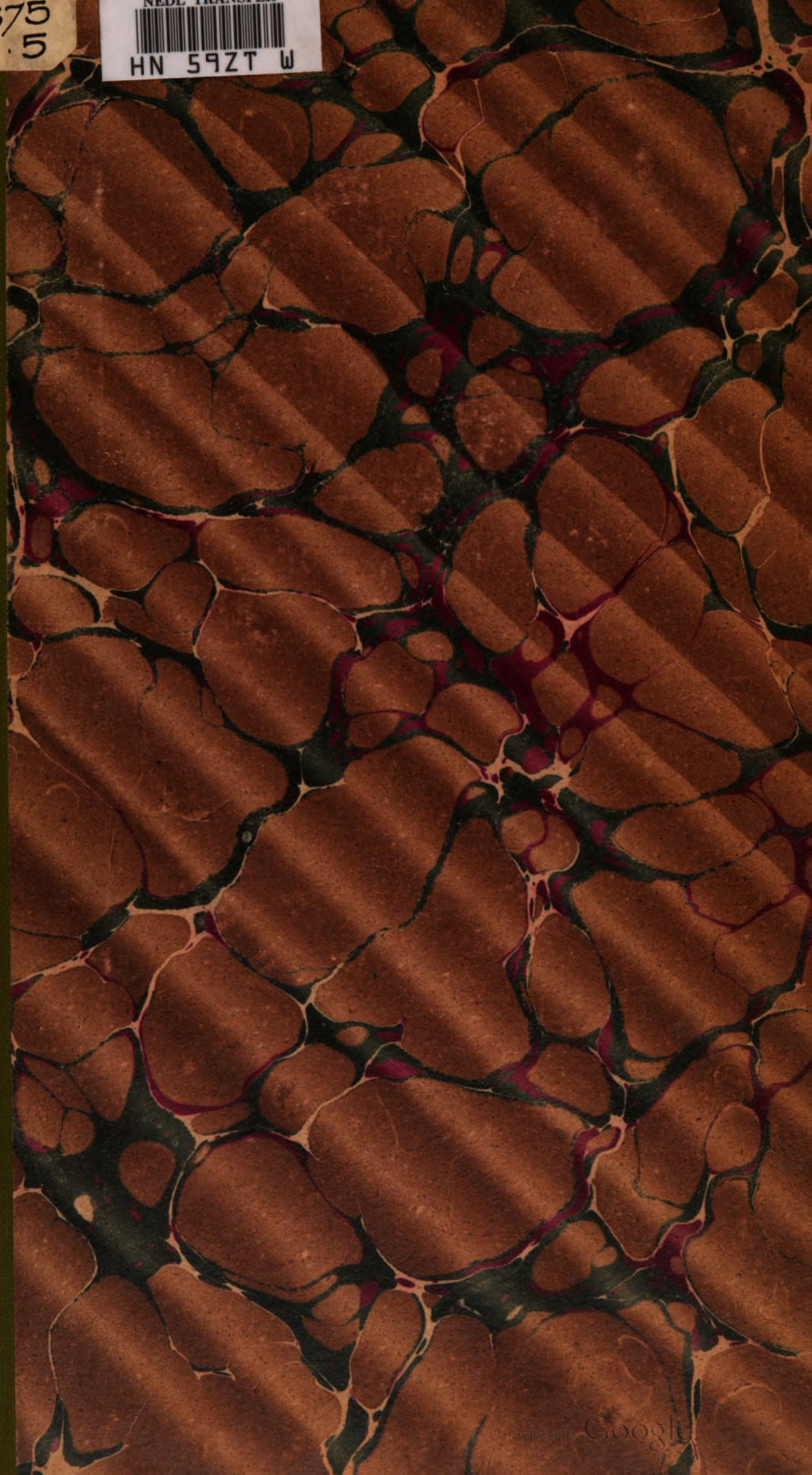
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Addresses at the Induction of Rev. Patton · 1879





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FROM

Rev Joseph F Tuttle

an Theological Seminary of the North-
West, Chicago, Ill. 1873.

ADDRESSES
AT THE
INDUCTION
OF
REV. FRANCIS L. PATTON
INTO
*"The Cyrus H. McCormick Professorship of
Didactic and Polemic Theology,"*
IN
THE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE
NORTH-WEST, *Chicago, Ill.*

Printed by order of the Board of Directors of the Seminary.

Inter-Ocean [Beach & Barnard] Steam Printing House, 16 Congress St., Scammon Court.

1873.

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Rev. Joseph F. Insile, D.D.
of Cranford, N.J., N.Y.

PREFACE.

A large audience assembled at the Third Presbyterian Church, Thursday evening, Oct. 3, to participate in the ceremonies of the inauguration of Rev. FRANCIS L. PATTON as Cyrus H. McCormick Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Seminary of the Northwest.

The exercises were opened with an Anthem by the Choir, after which the Scriptures were read by Rev. Dr. EDWARDS, of Peoria, Ill., and an appropriate hymn, read by Rev. WILLIS G. CRAIG, of Keokuk, and sung by the whole congregation. Prayer was offered by Rev. ARTHUR MITCHELL, of the First Presbyterian Church, when Hon. SAMUEL M. MOORE, President of the Board of Directors, addressed the audience.

INTRODUCTORY

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT,

HON. SAMUEL M. MOORE.

The age is a living, moving reality. It is full of interest to the thoughtful, active mind, and is full of incentives to labor. Effort, manly effort, is essential to the man, who would even know what is being done in this active age. Much more is this true of the man who will give direction and life to the age. He that is content to sit idle, whilst others move along and pass by, may catch glimpses of the world in which he lives, but he will comprehend nothing, enjoy nothing, and the people of the world will not be the wiser or happier for his having lived. It may be well for him if he is not run over, and trampled under foot, of living men. The world can't wait for men who do not do their part.

It is not only *the truth*, that is wide awake and pushing forward. Error, armed at every point, and nerved for the severest battles, and best contested races, stalks forth upon any and all occasions, and is defiant. Truth, on the other hand, none the less confident, shuns not the contest; and goes forth, it may be less pretending, but none the less courageously. This active world is so full of destructive error, and its votaries, that it well becomes those who would aid in every good to put forth every effort, in the use of all truthful appliances, for the overthrow of evil, and triumph of the truth.

Every Sunday School scholar, can tell us that "all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty and nine years," and that "he was the oldest man." In that, he spent more days, weeks, months and years upon the earth than any other man,

he was "the oldest man." But, is it all of life to live? Or does not life consist in seeing, hearing, feeling, loving, knowing, doing? The history of all progress, illustrates the force of the human mind, and exhibits in its details intense and powerful thought, in adapting general principles, to the necessities and wants of the world. Those who lived in former ages discovered very many useful and important general principles, and they succeeded to an amazing extent in adapting them to the wants of the *then* world. How much they left to be accomplished by those who have lived and acted for the last half century! The universe is a study, for the thoughtful, that can never be completely mastered. Wonder after wonder is revealed to an astonished and thinking world; and then still greater wonders remain to be discovered, and astonish other thinkers, who will be more surprised, at the ignorance of a previous age, than at the wonderful things they see and know.

The laborious and constant study, and scientific application, of these, once unknown, general principles, has given to this active age, such agencies, as steam, the printing press, the railroad, and the magnetic telegraph. The world will never begin to comprehend, the obligations under which it rests, to Watt, Fulton and Morse, for their study and application of those general laws and principles, that led to the development and use of such agencies. But Watt, Fulton and Morse, much as they achieved, did not do all that was done. Other men of science and learning not only in their day, but in previous ages assisted vastly in paving the way and preparing the material for their final grand triumph. Or, as one of the first educators of the West, whose name will ever be an honored one, frequently said to his students,—“Civil society is one great undivided whole, made up of an infinite variety of parts; hence the continued demand for every variety of talent.”*

*Rev. R. H. Bishop, D. D.

Not only the man of science and learning, but every village and country and city teacher, and artizan and mechanic, and farmer and day laborer contributes to the grand and glorious result. Everybody contributes to the result, except the idler, who merely consumes, what others produce.

By steam, all mechanical forces are increased and accelerated. By the railroad, locomotion and travel and transportation, is hastened, and space almost annihilated. By the press, error and truth, are alike scattered, broadcast over the land, as fast as steam and rail can carry them. By the telegraph, thoughts, and error, and truth, are at once communicated to the world. By all of these, and such like instrumentalities, the world is made to move with wonderful, amazing velocity. To keep up with such progress, men must everywhere and on all occasions be wide awake and use, to the utmost, every talent, and redeem every moment of time, with which they are provided by their Maker.

How favored, are those who live in such an age! How grand the privilege of aiding, even to a limited extent, in producing such results! How wonderful it is to live and see and know, what may be seen and known in such an age! He who lives but a decade, if he be "a live man," may see, hear, feel, love, know, and do more, than Methuselah could have seen, heard, felt, loved, known, or done, in his age, had he lived thrice the length of his longest of human lives.

The advancement and progress, that has been made in the past, but prepares the way for other, grander and more wonderful developments and achievements. Every department of life is better equipped and better prepared for mastering, developing, and adapting general principles and laws to the wants of the world, than in any previous age. Every advance, makes the foundations, upon which others must build, broader, deeper, and more enduring, and of course the better adapted

to new developments and the ever new and ever changing condition of the world. Men, in every department of life, embark upon the unknown future, with more zeal, more of confidence, and with higher hopes and expectations.

With these advantages, with these encouragements, with these hopes and expectations, and with *the truth*, taught, believed, practised, lived—what may not be accomplished within the next half century? If so much has been done, towards what remained to be done, what may not be expected? Could the curtain that veils the next fifty years be lifted, what glorious things, and what wonders might be seen! Truly glorious things await the young man of to-day! The privilege of being an actor, in producing such grand results, is high, beyond computation. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what shall be seen, heard, and conceived within the next fifty years. Who would not love to live and see and enjoy the further and more complete development of these principles, and of the grand truths that must promote the welfare of the creature, and the glory of the Creator? This being so, it follows, that no one can describe, in adequate terms, the great and inestimable privileges, and honor, of being an actor, however humble, in the hands of his Maker, in working out such grand results.

It is obvious that, at the same time that truth enjoys the advantages of advanced science and learning, and of accurate and more perfect thought; error has the same agencies. Error in its countless forms, now blatant and defiant, and then deceptive, assuming the form of an angel of light, forces into its service the press to print, and the railroad and telegraph to disseminate and scatter, its baneful and hurtful influences. His satanic majesty, has made much of the learning and skill of the world, subservient to his will. That is especially true of many of our institutions of learning, and of very many of the leading

newspapers of the day. These are fountains from which flow streams of knowledge. If the fountain be impure, so will be the stream. If the fountain be pure, so will be the stream, that must gladden and rejoice, and enrich, the peoples all through the ages to come. Can a fountain send forth both bitter and sweet water? The institutions of learning, and the press, must be brought under the power and control of the truth and its adherents, and then will flow from them such streams as rejoice and gladden all who love the word, and would see the glory of God.

This line of thought has engaged attention, that the objects, and aims, of life well spent, might be seen, and that the privileges of this age—of the present—might be the more highly appreciated. If these are properly estimated, all will vie with each other in teaching, maintaining and defending the truth, and all will strive to bring all the appliances of science, and learning, into complete subjection to the truth, and all will use every effort, to make all our schools, and colleges, and the secular press of the country, useful, and the most efficient agencies of fostering, promoting, spreading and establishing the truth. To do all this, every effort must be used to discover and avert the dangers that lie in the way. They must be known, and we must know their power to hurt, so that adequate means may be used to overcome them.

The Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the North-west, was organized by good men, who loved the truth. It was organized to teach the truth to young men, that they might go forth and teach that same truth to other countless numbers, and they to yet others. It is, this strong desire, to see men, everywhere, in every calling, and in all time, live and promote the truth, that have caused these good men to give of their substance, and time, and labor, and effort to establish this school of the prophets.

Hon. C. H. McCormick has acted wisely and well, in contributing one hundred and twenty thousand dollars to the endowment of the four professorships of the Seminary. He has manifested great wisdom in selecting such an object, upon which to bestow his means. As long as the truth is taught, he will rejoice in the fact that he has done a good thing, that must promote the best interest of the people and the up-building of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. For all this he must ever have the gratitude of all well-thinking men. Such munificence should be carefully guarded, and used only for the promotion of the truth. His reward, however, is greater, and more enduring than any monument of stone, or of brass. He has the sweet experience of the fact that, it is better to give, than to receive. So it will ever be with the man who realizes that his talents, time, and substance are all entrusted to him by a kind Providence, that they may be used for the good of the world, and for the glory of God. He that does most for the truth, will love the truth the more. He that does most to promote the happiness and peace, and usefulness of others, will have and enjoy the greater love for the world. So it must be with all who have done such things for the truth and this Seminary. Having done so much, they continue to labor the more earnestly, and to pray the more fervently for it. Good and great men have labored for the Seminary. The various chairs have, from time to time, been filled by men of learning, piety and ability. Some of them have gone to receive the reward purchased by grace. With those of our living professors and friends, we have still with us the influence and prayers of Drs. McMaster and Scott. All these men loved, and do still love, the truth.

"The Cyrus H. McCormick Professorship of Didactic and Polemic Theology," since the Seminary was located in this city, was, at first, filled by N. L. Rice, D.D., then by E. D. McMaster, D.D., and, after his lamented death, by Willis Lord,

D.D. These men are all too well known to require that anything should be said of them at this time and place.

To this chair Rev. Francis L. Patton has recently been elected by the unanimous vote of the Directors of the Seminary, and confirmed by the unanimous vote of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States. He has accepted, and we meet this evening, to welcome and induct him into the professorship. It is meet that he should come in the spirit of his master, with his heart full of love for the truth, and a desire to teach the truth, as he finds it in the word of God. We gladly welcome him here, and commend him to all, as suited to do the work that lies before him. He may see the glorious things, that older men will not be permitted to see on earth, and it is fit that he should enter upon this great life work with an appreciation of the opportunities that have claimed our attention. We know of no grander work to which we could call him. We trust he "was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto him, by the effectual working of His (God's) power." This being so, we trust that those taught and trained by him, may "have grace given" to so "preach the unsearchable riches of Christ" as "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ," and that they may realize that through Christ "we both have access by one spirit unto the Father."

We trust he and his colleagues may have "grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Then their teaching, and the preaching of those taught by them, will be "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of

Christ; that we be henceforth no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning creatures, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

To you, gentlemen of the Board of Directors, and of the Trustees, of the Seminary, and to you, his co-laborers as professors, and to you, young gentlemen, who are permitted to hear and learn THE TRUTH, in order that you may teach it to others, and to you, friends of the Seminary, and to all who love the truth, and desire its success,—to all of you, we commend the man called to do this great work. We ask, that you receive him in the spirit of the Master, and that you aid and encourage him in his great and arduous work. Pray that he teach ONLY the truth, and that he teach the truth in the love, and in the fear, and in the strength of the great head of the Church.

PROFESSOR PATTON: You have been elected, and have said that you accept of this position. You have also subscribed an obligation, that all professors are required to take. Do you now, as God may give you strength, "in the presence of the Board of Directors of this Seminary, and these witnesses, solemnly profess your belief that the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church contain a summary and true exhibition of the system of doctrine, order and worship taught in the Holy Scriptures, the only supreme and infallible rule of faith, and your approbation of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government, as being agreeable to the Scriptures; and do you promise that you will not teach, directly or indirectly, anything contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said

Confession and Catechisms, or the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church Government, and that you will faithfully execute the office of a Professor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest?"

(*Prof. Patton*—"I do.")

And now it is my pleasure to introduce Rev. Dr. R. W. Patterson, who will, in behalf of the Board of Directors of the Seminary, give to you words of encouragement and counsel.

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CHARGE

BY REV. R. W. PATTERSON, D. D.

My esteemed and beloved Brother : The duty has been devolved upon me of addressing some words to you on this occasion, in compliance with a fitting custom, and by way of expressing the deep interest of the Board, and friends of the Theological Seminary here represented, in the event of your formal entrance upon the duties assigned to you as professor of Theology in this institution. These words ought to be few, as we are assembled to-night mainly to perform the inaugural ceremony, and to listen to the exposition which you are about to give us of your conception of the noble work to which you have consecrated the prime of your strength.

Most heartily do I welcome you, my brother, on behalf of the Board, as well as on my own behalf, to the post of honor and usefulness in Christ's Church, which you have been called and have consented to occupy among us. You do not come to us as a total stranger. Though yet young in years, you were already known to us as no mere novice in Theological study and attainment, before your name was mentioned in connection with the chair which you are now to fill. We are therefore assured that you enter this field of service, not as an adventurer, but

as a laborer who well understands how severe are the toils to be undertaken, and in what manner the trees in the vineyard are to be pruned and cultured for the highest fruitfulness. We welcome you to this sphere of duty and privilege, as Christ's servant and the servant of the Church, and as *our* servant for Jesus' sake. And we extend to you the right-hand of our fellowship, not unmindful that this implies a pledge on the part of the officers and friends of this institution, to co-operate heartily and prayerfully with you as the instructor of our sons in the greatest of all sciences and in their preparation for practical enlistment in the grandest and most far-reaching of all enterprises.

We congratulate you on your willing devotion of your powers to a work so worthy of the best energies of a manly intellect and heart. We congratulate you, because we deem it a high honor for any man to be called by the Church to expound and defend her faith in a school of the prophets, and in a chair of instruction that is justly deemed inferior to no other. We congratulate you, because it is made your life's business to teach the science of God's revealed truth to young men who are to be the Church's leaders, and Christ's ambassadors to this revolted world in the ministry of reconciliation. We congratulate you, because you are summoned to this elevated sphere of labor in the most eventful age of the world's history that has yet appeared—an age full of indications that He who overturns and overturns, is stirring up the minds of men for the hastening of that mighty conflict which is to have its issue in the final triumph of truth and righteousness in the earth. It is a peculiar privilege for any true soldier of the Cross to live, and march forth under the banners of Immanuel, at such a time. And most especially is it a privilege for any strong-hearted soldier to take the position and perform the service of a high officer in the Lord's army when the sacramental hosts are being

marshalled for the decisive and closing battles of the campaign. We congratulate you, because you are called to duty in a new and hopeful portion of the field, where the skill and tactics of a good general may be turned to account in pursuance of original designs, and by fresh and peculiarly effective methods. And we congratulate you, because you enter upon your great work with youthful vigor on your side, — having been called to this position at a stage of life when you may reasonably hope for a longer period of service than has been allotted to any other Professor of Theology in our American Church. Most devoutly do we pray that God, in his good Providence, may give you at least forty years for the instruction of the Church's sons who are to mold the present and the next generation.

Need I speak of the *weighty responsibilities* that are devolved upon a teacher of Theological science, in such a community and such an age? Need I refer to the rising greatness of our wonderful country, our signally developing city, and the swelling tide of our Northwestern population with its unexampled enterprise? Need I point to the mental and moral, as well as physical revolutions that are being wrought in this amazing era, throughout Christendom, and among all the larger nations of the earth, beyond the pale of Christian civilization? Need I allude to the conflict of minds and opinions that is going forward to-day in almost every land, and that subjects all religious ideas and systems to such an ordeal of criticism and searching inquiry, as no previous age has known?

I will barely hint at a few of the requisites that seem to me to enter into the conditions of success in the theological teaching of this period; hoping that in so doing I shall not appear to trench upon the fuller range of discussion to which our attention is about to be invited.

First. I suggest the necessity of habits of calm, judicial and profound inquiry. The time has come when every leader in the Church must be prepared to meet thought with thought, independent investigation with independent investigation, elementary analysis with elementary analysis, philosophy with philosophy, specious error with clearly discriminated truth, sceptical science with believing science, ingenious assumption with moral evidence. It is useless in these days to appeal to creeds and confessions, or to the consent of religious denominations, or even of all Christendom, in the great struggle with unbelief, unless received opinions be considered in their proper relations to facts and to the moral nature of man. The time has past when inquiry could be stayed by denunciation, or by invoking the *odium theologicum* upon the heads of doubters. Truth is most powerfully commended from the midst of her proper atmosphere of serene confidence,—such confidence as springs from well-balanced and patient thinking in the light of all available knowledge. I know that you, my brother, will not attempt to teach theology, in this age, with a dogmatical spirit, or without those deep and settled inner convictions that result from unprejudiced and serious reflection upon valid evidences of truth as carefully compared with the apparent evidences of error.

Pardon me for saying, in the next place, that, in my judgment, every Professor of Theology, and especially in this age, ought to make it a leading aim, in his inquiries and teachings, to *advance* his favorite science by safe methods. We do not believe that any existing church, or any body of christian men, much less, any one man, is infallible in rendering judgments respecting doctrinal truth. We, as Protestants, dare not assume that any received system of Divinity or interpretations of the Holy Scriptures are free from imperfections. No doubt the essential doctrines of the Bible have already been in the

main rightly apprehended by large divisions of the Christian Church. To suppose otherwise is to pronounce Divine revelation a failure. But there are a multitude of tokens that our best digested creeds and confessions need further adjustment, and that our most approved expositions of Scripture are to be followed by more satisfactory expositions. And it is as much the duty of a Professor of Theology to contribute whatever he may to Theological progress as it is the duty of a Professor of Chemistry or Natural History to aid in advancing the science to which he is devoted. Nay, the call for original investigations and fresh contributions to Theological Science, is more urgent than the demand for the furtherance of Natural Science, by as much as the former is more important than the latter. It is possible, indeed, that an instructor should accomplish great good by carrying his classes through the prescribed course of Theological study if he only clearly and systematically expounds the doctrines of his Church just as he finds them in the standards, without attempting to shed new light on any of the difficult questions that are debated in the outside world. But in so doing, he falls short of the full work that is set before a Master in Israel in these days. The great problem, at this point, is to save essential truth by separating it from misconceptions, and to teach young men how to keep abreast of the age, without being swept away by the rising tide of doubt and destructive criticism. No *stereotyped* lessons will answer at such a time, any more than the *hasty rejection* of conclusions in which the Church has rested through all the ages of her history. Men will think for themselves in these times. And our candidates for the ministry should be prepared to *guide* a mighty mental movement which it is neither possible nor desirable to arrest. If our Theology needs revision, let us revise it; if it only needs new defences at some points, let the better methods of defence be made clear and avail-

able. To send out young men now to reproduce what Calvin and Turretin and Owen and Edwards and Alexander said, just as they shaped their great thoughts, is to put soldiers into a modern army arrayed in the panoply of ancient warriors. We must clothe our soldiers in the freshest armor, and train our young cadets according to the most improved tactics.

I hardly need suggest that Theology now, more than ever before, must be taught as a *practical* science. The popular clamor for practical themes in the pulpit at the present time arises, of course, from a sad oversight of the vital connection between true doctrinal faith, and good works in the higher sense, which are the fruit of an intelligent scriptural faith reigning in the heart. But all such errors derive their plausibility from their antagonism to opposite extremes. Our Theology was formerly taught too much in dry, dogmatical forms, insomuch that the impression gained ground that we exalted creed and dogma above life and its proper working. Now we need to correct the popular mistake for which we have given a partial occasion, by pointing all our Theological teachings as directly as possible towards the practical applications that are to be made of them. A Theology that cannot be effectively *preached* needs revision; and a mode of Theological instruction that savors more of the scientific than the evangelical spirit is not fit for the uses of the Church of Christ. I know that there is a distinction to be maintained between Didactic and Polemical Theology and Pastoral Theology. But is it not incumbent upon every teacher of our candidates for the Gospel ministry, to keep his eye continually directed towards the great practical ends for which their acquisitions are to be employed? And are there not a multitude of ways in which the teacher of Theological Science can impress upon the minds of his students the great truth that every doctrine has its place and value among the materials that are to be used by the wise

master-builder in rightly constructing the Lord's spiritual temple? The work of the Church is not only defensive. It must be aggressive. The war must be carried into the enemy's country; and this not so much by direct assaults upon the strongholds of error as by faithfully commending the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God. It is well for this reason, that our Theological Professors are being chosen more and more from the ranks of our experienced pastors. You, my brother, will know how to draw on your pastoral experience in giving mellowness and spiritual force to your ordinary teachings in the class room; and you will not forget that the doctrines which your students are to preach have a multitude of bearings in relation to all the outward duties of common life, and all the interests of human society, as well as in respect to the salvation of individual souls.

Lastly. I cannot lay too much emphasis on the necessity of infusing into our new Seminary, in all its departments, the spirit of prayerful zeal for the honor of the Great Master, and the establishment of His Kingdom in the earth. The temper of our Theological Seminaries is not sufficiently evangelical. Our young men come forth to their work needing two or three years' experience to awaken within them the true spirit of their calling. This is the popular objection against our present method of training young men for the ministry. How shall we fairly and practically meet it? Mainly, as it seems to me, by raising the spiritual tone of our Seminaries. And this can only be done by treating the whole process of theological education as a holy service, in which the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit are as much needed as in the duties of the pulpit, or in any other labor for the sanctification of Christians, or the salvation of the perishing. Let all of us who have special responsibilities to bear in forming the character of our young Seminary keep in mind the vital necessity for a con-

tinuous baptism of this school of the prophets with the Spirit of all grace, that such streams may perpetually flow from it, as will make glad the city of God, and heal the nations.

I have detained you and this audience too long. I leave this subject in the midst, earnestly commending you and our Seminary, and the young men assembled in it, to the Great Head of the Church, in whose Providential care and guidance, we trust for all those beneficent results, that constitute the goal of our hopes and prayers, and toils, in the kingdom of our Common Lord.

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CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND CURRENT THOUGHT.



ADDRESS

OF

REV. FRANCIS L. PATTON.



MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ;

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE NORTH-WEST :

Beyond the explicit promise just given * I have no guarantee to offer for the faithful discharge of the duties, which, by your election, and the concurring voice of the highest judicatory of our Church, have been entrusted to me. But the subscription formula to which I have given assent contrasts so positively with a sentiment which is fast gathering strength, that I feel, in a measure, invited to appear before you, to-night, holding a brief for theology.

Very decided testimony to the value of the doctrinal system taught in our standards is given, alike in the provision made by the munificent founder of the chair of Didactic Theology, and in the solemn pledge which by your Constitution is required of its incumbent. I need not say that a very different opinion respecting the importance of theology is gaining currency. Nor is it strange. For, if theology were an isolated study, if its province were so large, and its relations so wide, its advocates in all likelihood would encounter no opposition. But so far-reaching are its problems, that open conflict is the only course possible to those who cannot recognize its claims. Theology must vindicate its right to a place in the peerage of

* "and do promise that I will not teach, directly or indirectly, any thing contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said confessions and catechisms, or the fundamental principles of Presbyterian church government, and that I will faithfully execute the office of a Professor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the North-West."—*Extract from Constitution of Pres. Theo. Sem. of North-West.*

science, or its advocate will be regarded as one who in these days of needle-guns and railroads is making a dogmatic stand for flint-locks and stage coaches. The dogmas of theology must be seen to stand in vital relation with human conduct, or they will be treated as fossils worthy only of a shelf in a cabinet of antiquated opinions, and valuable only for the light they throw on the history of human progress.

I purpose, then, to offer a defence of the department with which I shall have to deal, and the theme to which I invite attention is, Christian Theology and Current Thought. I intend to notice some of the leading questions which are of present interest in the sphere of religious opinion, and it will be convenient to group them under five divisions, viz :—Christian theology, as related to secular science; as exclusive; as formulated; as progressive; as symbolical.

By following this order, we shall gradually narrow the discussion and bring it nearer home.

I. CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AS RELATED TO SECULAR SCIENCE.

Theology, as didactic, occupies a well-defined area. It does not profess to teach botany, to decide doubtful questions in geology, to account for the origin of species, to discuss rival schools of ethics or adjudicate between conflicting systems of psychology. Theology as apologetic, on the other hand, touches secular science at a great many points, and the theologian is brought face to face with scientific hypotheses and becomes of necessity, a party to controversy.

It is a noteworthy fact that the questions in science which awaken the most general attention, are those which concern our religious beliefs, and the interest felt in them is due largely to their theological relations. For there are some physicists whose devotion to Nature rises to ecstasy when they have hit

upon a fact which they suppose will damage an ancient faith. These are the men who suppose that the laurels of Galileo and Luther are to grow green again on their brows, and, that under their leadership, the world is to witness a completed reformation in a discarded Bible. Religion helps the sale of scientific books more than is acknowledged. For outside of the narrow circle of scientific specialists, the ordinary facts of science would produce but little impression. It is only when men go below the surface of mere phenomenal existence, and strike the foundation granite of our religious nature, that they attract general attention. Men are religious at bottom, and the book which attacks our religious being is sure of being read by him who is anxious to oust his conscience, as well as by him who stands in timid apprehension that science will one day rob him of his God. The aspirant for popular scientific fame has his best ally in our religious nature. This it is which sells his books and crowds his lecture room. And it is this same religious nature which has invested some questions with an importance out of all proportion to their intrinsic value, until the pigeon fancier is cited as a damaging witness against the inspired account of the origin of species.

It is useless to deny that scientific conclusions are gaining ground which are in open conflict with the Bible. Nor is it the wisest policy for Christian apologists to announce their readiness to show the possible harmony of these hypotheses with Revelation. This is only a respectable way of beating a retreat. It is to fire and fall back. The true course is to give up, or make a stand. And the theologian is bound to protest against those conclusions in secular science which ignore, contradict, or exclude, Christian theology.

As these three categories seem to comprehend the questions at issue between science and Scripture, let us notice them separately.

Conclusions which ignore Christian Theology.

There is a growing impatience with theological conceptions of the universe. Theology, we are reminded, is holding her sceptre in palsied hands, and her dominion, like the Pope's, is suffering from the encroachment of the secular power. Theism fares no better than polytheism at the hands of advancing science. The Reign of Law leaves no room for Providence. The priests of Baal have appeared in the *role* of Elijah, and, with something of Elijah's sarcasm are proposing a prayer gauge.

But we take the liberty to say that the assertors that religion is on the wane, are at fault in their arithmetic. Human wisdom has not all segregated into a scientific lump, leaving only fools to go to church. Christian missions and Christian munificence testify that the world is not losing faith in God. But if it were, universal atheism would not dethrone Him. Though, one by one, the believers in God should renounce their faith or pass away, until the last survivor, like Humboldt's Aturian parrot* should find himself speaking in a strange language to the men of his time, yet he might well give his solitary testimony and remain unshaken in his faith.

And, if there is a God, it is absurd to sneer at theological conceptions of the universe: for faith in Him must of necessity color our ideas of the world. If by that causal judgment, which is the birthright of every man, we are led up to God, then the road which leads us up must take us down again to a consideration of the works of His hand. The facts of science are corroborative of theism. The uniformity of nature, the unity of force, the unknowable power which baffles analysis,

* "There still lives, and it is a singular fact, an old parrot in Maypures which cannot be understood, because as the natives assert, it speaks the language of the Atures—an extinct tribe of Indians whose last refuge was the rocks of the foaming cataract of the Orinoco."—*Humboldt, quoted in Maudsley's Physiology and Pathology of Mind, p. 9.*

are in exact correspondence with the Scripture doctrine of one Personal God; and it is unseemly for men who confess their ignorance of the agency which is behind phenomena, to scout theism without study. Nescience has no right to ridicule faith. For in that a man says I do not know, he affirms that the theist may not be so far astray; and while the Being of God is with him a matter of doubt, his cosmogony can only be provisional, and his ridicule of a theistic cosmogony is weak and wicked.

Conclusions which contradict Christian Theology.

Theism conditions revelation, and revelation strengthens theism. The two are mutually auxiliary. Christian theology proceeds on the assumption of a Revelation. The Bible must expect free handling, and win confidence by standing scrutiny. Scientists have the right to show, if they can, that its claims are not established, or to break down its authority by proving it false. But this cannot be done by confronting it with an unproved hypothesis. The attempt is made, notwithstanding, to displace the teachings of Scripture by hypotheses which are not only unproved, but which in the nature of the case, are unprovable. It surely does not require much penetration to see that there is a wide *hiatus* between the proposition man *may* have developed out of a monkey, and the proposition man *must* have so originated. The chasm between the may have been, and the must have been, is to be spanned before there can be a strong case against the Bible. There are some questions, and this may be one of them, which, aside from revelation, cannot be conclusively settled; and, for this reason, theology is, properly speaking, ancillary to science, as furnishing material for more complete induction. The milestone which informs us of our distance from a neighboring city, leaves us quite in the dark respecting the direction in which the mileage is to be counted; and, so, looking on a brother man who holds

a position quite remote from the two extremes of human life, it might be difficult to say whether he was moving downward from purity to barbarism, or upward from a savage state to civilization. It is revelation which sheds light on man's primitive condition, and furnishes reply to Lubbock and Tylor.

Conclusions which exclude Christian Theology.

✍ The doctrine antipodal to theism is evolution. And evolution is a device for banishing God. According to this theory life is spontaneously generated from dead matter; the higher forms emerge out of the lower, and man is the long result. Primitive man was a savage as we might expect him to have been, and civilization is a growth. The moral intuitions are only hereditary experiences, and mind is only matter which thinks that it thinks. Evolutionists do not all carry the theory to the same length. Mr. Wallace does not allow that Darwinism accounts for man's body, to say nothing of his soul. Mr. Mivart holds that bodywise he has monkey ancestors, but takes refuge in creationism, and maintains that God is the Father of his spirit. Life is the unit of Mr. Darwin's scientific speculations, and though Huxley would not say *credo*, to the doctrine of *Abiogenesis*, he leans very decidedly towards it.

The love of unity, one can easily see, will have a tendency to make those who favor evolution at all, desirous of referring everything to it and Mr. Herbert Spencer is the man who has carried the premises of evolution to their logical results, and whose constructive mind has reduced to symmetry the labors of specialists in the different fields of inquiry.

✍ The conclusions reached by this method are not only contradictory to theology, they are exclusive of theology. Evolution assigns mind a place in physics, and when mental science becomes a department of physiology, faith ends and skepticism reigns. Morals cease to be authoritative, when right and

wrong resolve themselves into questions of utility, and are compared to the instinct of the retriever.

In the hands of the physiologist, the thinking subject is reduced to zero. Thought is as mechanical as digestion, and one is as moral as the other. The idea of God becomes a delusion; religion a farce, and the only thing man has to look forward to is a coffin and a grave. Such is the effect of mere phenomenal studies that men have come seriously to believe that matter can develop into conscious life; can invent the hypothesis of a God; can assert that it is mind and persistently challenge refutation; can believe that its actions are voluntary though in reality as mechanical as the motions of a clock; can believe that it shapes its conduct in accordance with the will of its hypothetical God; can be the subject of emotions which irresistibly suggest immortality and that, on the strength of a belief in an immortal life, it can foster hope and listen to entreaty. There are men who, denying God mind, personality, will, can believe that matter has developed these conceptions and has been the dupe of itself, that human history has been a wholesale cheat, and that the agencies which have revolutionized states and written poems; which have won victories and discoursed philosophy; which have made laws and painted Madonnas, are resolvable into the forces of chemistry and magnetism.

There was a point in the retrogressive journey of doubt beyond which Descartes could not go. These men, however, are trying hard to think, and at the same time doubt the thinking self. But, by a necessity of thought, they are compelled, in the act of advancing their ideas, to embody a protest against them. They write books to prove that the personality which conditions all they say has no existence, and to prove to men, whose personality they take for granted in the fact that they address them, that their personality is a cheat. How mind

can manage to devour itself is a curious problem, over which we must not linger. Enough has been said to show that the domain of theology is contiguous to the realm of science, and that the border land is a battle ground.

It would appear, then, that the dispute between secular science and Christian theology cannot be settled by a policy of non-intrusion. There was strife between the herdsmen of Abram and those of Lot because they stood on common ground, and the conflict between Scripture and science comes of their dealing with the same questions. The dispute, unlike the patriarchal one, cannot be settled by a re-distribution of territory, for physical science, as we have seen, with a greediness exceeding Lot's, claims undisputed possession of the entire realm of knowledge.

As little can we accord with the sentiment that theologians have no right to scientific opinions. To do so would be to allow that the theist repeats his creed and says his prayers under scientific sanction. If a man knows that it is day, he need pay little attention to him who avers that it is night; and if a man knows, on God's authority, that Adam was made in the likeness of God, he may answer Darwin with an indignant negative.

A railway collision has been facetiously described as the attempt of two trains to pass each other on the same track. Science and theology, dealing with the same questions, have come to a standstill. We shall continue to claim for theology the right of way, until the arguments for the inspiration of the Scriptures have been candidly examined and fairly set aside.

Besides, if special scientific culture is the pre-requisite of a questioning reception of a scientific hypothesis, it is useless

for scientific men to write books for the purpose of convincing the lay reader. Let the scientific dogma go forth with the claim of infallibility at once, and let the furnace of ridicule be heated for the theological Daniel who refuses assent. No, indeed. Logic is a universal science, and men who understand its laws can tell whether the facts which are adduced in any case will support the inferences based upon them. Exceptional culture in science is no more necessary, however desirable, as the condition of an opinion on the value of a scientific hypothesis, than it is necessary that a man should be a thief in order that he may be an intelligent jurymen in a larceny case.

Christian theology has a right to be recognized as an element in human knowledge. And when men refuse to recognize God as Ruler and Revealed, they lack the true inductive spirit. It is not scientific to adopt a theory covering a class of unexamined facts which the theory will not explain. A theory which meets a protest in a persistent personality, which has no explanation of moral convictions, no answer to the claims of Scripture, no mode of accounting for the origin and growth of the Christian Church, is surely not a satisfactory theory of the universe. The theist, however, finds himself in possession of a consistent faith. He accepts his personality as a fact, the laws of belief as veracious, and moral intuitions as obligatory. Belief in God is the necessary result of the constitution of his nature. Revelation does not surprise him, and because attested, is accepted. Its pages throw light on the genesis of man, the origin of marriage, the permanence of species, and they have scientific value. It is surely more likely that the theistic hypothesis is true, and that a theory which is at war with the universal beliefs of mankind, and which stands only by wholesale discredit of testimony, is false. If probability were conceded to be the guide of life, and if, as the advocates of an improbable hypothesis, the men alluded to did not assume the attitude which

justifies skepticism on the ground of the barest possibility, theism would be the unanimous faith of the world.

May we not hope, however, that the time is coming, and is not so far away, when the student of physical science will see that theism furnishes the material for the widest and the safest induction, and that he is the true philosopher who reads the universe as the written thought of God, and, under the two categories of God in nature and God in history, subordinates all knowledge ?

II—CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AS EXCLUSIVE.

Mere theism is minus the gospel. And we must deal now with a controversy between theism and Christianity.

Thanks are due to Max Muller and other students of comparative theology for the services they have rendered in showing that the religious sentiments are part of the original dowry of humanity ; that monotheism was man's ancient faith ; that human history is an apostasy, and not an improvement. It is a pity that in helping theism, they have hurt Christianity ; that in co-ordinating, instead of contrasting Christianity with other religions, they have declared against the very principle in defence of which the martyrs shed their blood. It was Christianity as an exclusive religion which the Apostles preached, and to rob it of this character is to work its ruin. It is a religion which, if not exclusive, is one for which the world has no need. It stands on such an exceptional basis that it must be proved false or allowed unchallenged authority. In the great fact whence dates its origin, and in which consists its significance, are found its finality, and its exclusiveness. Men show plainly by the arguments they use that they do not assign the proper value to this fact.

Christian exclusiveness, we are told, is unscientific. Does not knowledge come by comparison, and how without study of other religions, can we affirm that Christianity is entitled to pre-eminence? The Deity of Christ, we reply, can be determined without the aid of Sanscrit, and without wading through the three hundred and twenty-five ponderous volumes of Buddhist Scriptures. To require us to withhold assent to this great doctrine until we have pursued a course of reading in Comparative Theology, is as absurd as it would be to require us to suspend judgment respecting the Binomial theorem, until we had studied the Chinese classics. The Bible gives all the material we need for reaching a conclusion respecting the claims of Christ and if Christ is God, the religion which He came down on earth to teach, and which He commanded his disciples to carry round the world, must, without controversy, be supreme.

It is not from arrogance or prejudice, it is not because we are tenacious of an ancient faith, it is not that we have the unreasonable conservatism which makes us dread to leave an old anchorage; still less is it through lack of love, that we refuse to embrace a Catholicity which will put the Bible on a level with the Vedas, or count among the people of God the Buddhist and the Mohammedan. Nor are appeals to sentiment likely to have much weight with men whose religion is rooted in an emphatic and uncompromising conviction respecting the Deity of Christ and His atoning death. The point at issue is purely one of fact. If we are calling Jesus God, in error, by all means we should be made aware of the mistake. But if this faith is true then the noblest charity is that which looks squarely in the face the appalling fact of heathenism.

Some try to set aside the exclusiveness of Christianity by a comparative estimate of morality. And when it is shown that old religions are not so immoral as they have been supposed,

nor ancient faiths so far astray; and, above all, when picked examples of exemplary morality are met with, it is argued that since we have undervalued heathenism we have over-estimated Christianity, and that religions which embrace such splendid possibilities as are actualized in Socrates and Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus, deserve better treatment than uncompromising contrast with Christianity.

To argue thus, is to mistake the ground on which Christianity bases its exceptional claim. The apostles did not go forth merely or mainly as the teachers of a code, but as the heralds of a gospel. They did not base their own position of contrast on their superior morals, but, on the contrary, the great fact on which they insisted was that "*sin* had drawn the bar sinister across the broad shield of the handiwork of God,"* and that, as the result, the entire race was involved in a condemnation from which nothing could save them but the blood of Christ.

Nor does it shake our faith in the exclusiveness of Christianity to be reminded of the common elements held in solution by it and other religions. It is not strange at all that Christianity lays claim to exceptional honor, on the ground of the exceptional fact which differentiates it, particularly when that fact is the everlasting union of God and man in the Person of Christ. To affirm of two things, their identity or equality on the ground of elements common to both, would not in other departments of knowledge be counted as good reasoning. Diamond is not charcoal, though both contain carbon; and strychnine is not a wholesome beverage, though its elements enter into the composition of tea.

Deep in the pagan's conscience, we are told, and behind the polytheism which directs his worship, and crowds his literature is the belief in one God. But the doctrine of the Divine

* Ellicott. *Destiny of the Creature*, p. 8.

unity even in its purity will not save men. The heathen holds in a childish form the maturer faiths of the Christian, Max Muller says. But these maturer faiths, we reply, are not justifying faiths. The heathen is sincere!—yes, and his depravity is seen in the fact that the worst sins can secure the approval of his conscience. The heathen had longed for an Incarnation. But hunger is not food. They believe in expiation. But *their* sacrifices are not *the* sacrifice.

Christianity conditions salvation on faith in Jesus Christ. Hence its exclusive character and aggressive spirit. If the exclusiveness of Christianity is denied, obvious inferences follow. The conversion of the heathen must then appear to be at least an undertaking of questionable wisdom. Why preach the gospel in India if the gospel of Buddha leads to the same goal as that of Christ? And then, why is Christianity of more value to us than to the heathen? Why perpetuate it when we cease to propagate it? Or why was it of more importance that our forefathers should have been enlightened than that we should proceed with the evangelization of the world—in a word, what would the world have lost had Christianity perished with its founder? Deny the exclusiveness of Christianity, and, so far as redemption is concerned, it would not be hard to conclude that the incarnation was an uncalled-for event. If the religion of Jesus is co-ordinated with the other religions of the world, no good reason can be given for its dominant attitude and uncompromising spirit, and the marvel will be that a system originating in so pure a mind should prove so arrogant. But nothing has been said in our day against Christian exclusiveness, which might not, with equal cogency, have applied to the Apostle Paul. It would suffice, therefore, to appeal to his conversion and career, as furnishing conclusive testimony in favor of the position here maintained. For, while the latter was shaped by a dominant

conviction that the blood of Christ alone can save the soul, the former was associated with events which no man in his senses could misapprehend. The miracle which led Paul to preach the faith he once destroyed, left him, at the same time, with an unquestioning conviction that the road to Calvary is the only road to Heaven.

The whole discussion may be made to turn on this proposition: Faith in Jesus Christ is essential to salvation; and if this is sustained, the exclusiveness of Christianity will be established. This proposition will be denied by two classes, specifically distinct; that is to say, by those who believe in the atonement, but deny that its efficacy is limited by faith, and by those who, denying the Divinity of Christ, deny the atonement. Let us glance at the position assumed by each.

If atonement in design and effect covers every human being, then the work of the Church was done when Christ went up to Heaven. How then, is the command to preach explained, and why is salvation associated with repentance and faith? Trinitarian universalism is a mixture of faith and skepticism. It receives Heaven on the authority of the Bible, but it rejects the doctrine of hell, though taught on the same authority. It tries to defend itself by defending God. But, in vain. For, if we depend on the Bible for our knowledge of God's character, we must take as an element in His character, the Bible doctrine of Retribution.

The next great class are those who deny the Deity of Christ; some by interpreting the Bible, and others by throwing the Bible away.

Exegesis will lend no support to Unitarianism. Jesus is more than man. For, to say nothing of His matchless life, His pure doctrine, His original plan, His wide-spread success, the miracles He wrought, the prerogatives He claimed, and the attributes ascribed to Him, it is enough to appeal to

the historic fact that He rose from the dead, and rose in vindication of His Divine claims. Did He rise because he was God, or did God raise Him from the dead to give emphasis to a lie?

The resurrection of Christ answers Socinianism and Arianism at once. It proves that Christ was more than man, and that He was not less than God.

Rationalism deals in a more summary way with this central truth. And it has reduced to its lowest terms the question concerning the Person of Christ. Jesus is a myth or he is God. Let us raise the question: What is that Ideal Form which we see in the four Gospels? Were the Evangelists biographers or artists? We learn from Greek mythology how a corrupt age produced corrupt ideals, and how these, when fixed in marble or in verse, became the educators of the people. Are we, likewise, to regard the character of Jesus as the product of the human mind? Is Christianity only an elevated mythology? If this were a legitimate conclusion, it must effectually close the debate on the exclusiveness of Christian theology. To this question it were enough, however, to reply, that an ugly face cannot cast a comely shadow, and that a character of such matchless beauty as Jesus of the gospels, never could have been the reflection of the religious consciousness of a people like the Jews.

But with more force, it may be further argued, that the gospels have been traced back to a point so nearly contemporaneous with the events described, that it would have been as impossible for them to have gained credence, had they been false, as it would be for the "Battle of Dorking" to pass for authentic history. Stubborn facts have answered Strauss, and vindicated the historic claims of the four Evangelists.

Recognizing, therefore, the true humanity of Jesus, we stand in an attitude similar to that of the doubting disciple, who, in

the act of realizing the manhood of his Lord, rose to the full confession of His Deity.

Christ is God; and therefore, Christ's gospel is uncompromising. The Deity of Christ is *the* doctrine of our faith. With it Christianity stands or falls.

III—CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AS FORMULATED.

The Bible is the source of theological knowledge. But the truths taught in it are unmethodized. No single passage gives an exhaustive statement of any doctrine, and the doctrines are not presented in their relations to one another. In saying this, the organic unity of Scripture is not overlooked. The candid reader of the Bible cannot fail to regard it as the progressive unfolding of a plan, and to see that through it, from Genesis to Revelation, "the same increasing purpose runs." But this unity is apparent in the genetic relation of its parts, rather than in the logical relation of its doctrines.

When the teachings of Scripture respecting a truth have been collated, and their equivalent expressed in a formula, we have a *dogma*. These truths, or dogmas, brought together, in logical subordination, and more or less elaborately discussed, constitute a *system*. It will suit my purpose to distinguish between theology as dogmatic, and theology as systematic, and to treat them separately.

I. THEOLOGY, AS DOGMATIC.

Our acquaintance with current literature need not be extensive in order that we may learn with what aversion dogma is regarded by some.

And this aversion is traceable, we think, to three main causes: Depreciation of doctrine; mistaken zeal for Scripture phraseology; and false inferences, from the imperfection of our knowledge and the limitation of our faculties.

Depreciation of Doctrine.

Dislike of a truth, very commonly takes the form of a dislike of the formula which embodies it. And, without denying that strict loyalty to Scripture is compatible with a desire for a re-statement of some formulas, objections to dogma are nevertheless traceable mainly to the slight store set upon doctrinal truth. But, why should doctrine be disliked? Doctrine professes to be truth, and truth should not be lightly esteemed. Matthew Arnold ridicules our definite doctrinal conceptions. But if there is material for making them definite, why not do so? Why wish to cloud what God has made clear? If God has made the theological landscape stand out, in sharp outline, in the clear atmosphere of Revelation, why wreath it in mists? We are in possession of material for definite theological knowledge, and when a man like Matthew Arnold tells us that the personality of God and the resurrection of Christ are not parts of his creed, nor properly parts of any man's creed, he is teaching a system of theological nescience which borders on Atheism.

Doctrine is of great importance,—we propose to show,—and if it is, the correct expression of it cannot be a matter of indifference.

Doctrine constitutes the basis of authoritative ethics. Moral obligation involves the factors of a personal self related to a Personal God. Deny self-hood by materializing mind, and obligation ceases. A man will take short cuts to justice, and gratify private revenge, when he is persuaded that after death he has nothing to fear. Deny God,* and what

* "When the National Assembly drew up its famous declaration of the Rights of man, in 1789, 'write the name of God at the head of the Declaration,' said the Abbe Gregoire, 'or you leave them without foundation, and you make right the equivalent of force. You declare not the rights of man, but the rights of the strongest. You inaugurate the reign of violence.' The Assembly refused. Gregoire was correct in his judgment,—and the Reign of Terror proved that rights unbased in God produce an authority which is brute force."—*Baring-Gould's Christianity, Eng. Ed., p. 88.*

then is the ground of obligation? You may tell a man that in the long run it will be to his interest to do right, but you cannot generate obligation out of the love of happiness; and you cannot reach an authoritative system of ethics on an Atheistic basis.

Practice grows out of doctrine,—a more concrete way of putting the foregoing idea. We pray, because we believe in God's personality. We send missionaries, because we believe in salvation by the blood of Christ. Surely the doctrine cannot be of less value than the practice which grows out of it. It is a mistake, therefore, to make disparaging comparisons between men of thought and men of action. It is not by any means an unimportant work, to defend our primary beliefs, or to maintain the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, when the possibility of Christianity is conditioned on the veracity of the former and the validity of the latter. Nor is it necessary that doctrinal knowledge should make men juiceless or prevent them from being practical. And if, as Mr. Froude* asserts, there has been a divorce effected between doctrines and morals, the pulpit is to blame. For the whole sphere of practical life comes within the province of the preacher, and perish the theology which will not let me lift my voice against the man who gambles with that which is the staff of life, or deals lightly with wedded love.

Religion cannot be separated from doctrine. The antithesis between theology and religion is even more common than that between theology and morals. But religion must terminate on God. And the character of a man's religion will be deter-

* "Many a hundred sermons have I heard in England; many a dissertation on the mysteries of faith, on the divine mission of the clergy, on apostolic succession, on bishops and justification, and the theory of good works and verbal inspiration, and the efficacy of the sacraments: but never, during these thirty wonderful years, never one, that I can recollect, on common honesty, on those primitive commandments, 'Thou shalt not lie, and Thou shalt not steal.'"—*Short Studies on Great Subjects, 2d Series, page 333.*

mined, therefore, by that of his theology. He may not allow an objective revelation to influence his religious feelings, but his feelings, nevertheless, have relation to a subjective theology. For a man to fall back on religion, in order that he may justify his denial of Scripture doctrine, is only a convenient way of evading the question whether the doctrine of Scripture is true. If it is true, it is perilous to have a religion which is not based on it. A Christian may distinguish between theology and religion, by saying that a knowledge of doctrine may exist without experimental religion, which of course is true. But the Christian whose experience is the deepest, would be the last to disparage doctrine in order to help his piety.

The marrow of Christianity is a doctrine—"Jesus Christ and Him Crucified." This makes Christianity precious. To omit this is to rob the religion of Jesus of its value. To keep it in the background is to betray the Son of Man with a kiss.

Inconsiderate Zeal for Scripture Phraseology.

But suppose that a man approves of all we say in regard to doctrine, may he not ask, with reason: Why have men not adhered to scriptural phraseology? Why have they gone out of their way to invent formulas?

Our reply is, that without formulas, we can neither express doctrine nor protest against error.

Let us take, for example, the doctrine of the Person of Christ. The devout mind must desire to have all the knowledge that is possible concerning this great mystery. We know that He is God, though not from any one proof text; that He was man, with a human body and a human soul; that the two natures were distinct and entire—humanity was not deified and divinity was not dormant; that there were not two Egos, two centres of consciousness, but one Person.

Suppose, now, we wish to express these separate truths in a single statement; how is it to be done? We cannot find a

passage in Scripture which will suit us. If we adhere to Scripture phraseology, we must be satisfied with a partial statement, or we must carry in our memory the collated proof texts. The latter is out of the question, and the former would teach error, since a part would be taken for the whole.

Now, is it not a fact that in studying Scripture in reference to any truth, we make up our minds as to the meaning of the combined teachings of Scripture, and that we carry what serves as an equivalent in our memory? If asked to give our opinion on any doctrine, would we not do it in our own words, without being careful to cite Scripture *verbatim*? If, as a matter of fact, in spite of ourselves, we do use formulas, is there any harm in writing down these formulas in black and white, and, instead of expressing them loosely, aiming at an exact equivalent for Scripture?

Then what better can we do than fall in with the formula of our catechism: "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person forever."

But the Church has been driven to formulated expressions of faith as safeguards against error. If a man says he believes that Paul was inspired, and adds, so was Shakspeare, it will be necessary for Christians to find out the exact sphere of the word inspiration as used in the Scripture, and to define it. Hence, when men in the early centuries could call Christ divine, and yet regard him as a creature, the Nicene fathers formulated the doctrine of the deity of Christ in an unequivocal symbol. And the fact that Christianity is identified with the doctrine of the deity of Christ justifies the Nicene Creed. It stands in our literature to-day, not as the monument of an orthodox triumph, but as a barrier against the intrusion of error. And with something of the feeling which a Hollander

would entertain toward the man who should break the dykes and let in the waters of the German ocean, should I regard the proposition to abolish creeds and expose the church to the tides of skepticism.

False inferences from the imperfection of our knowledge and the limitation of our faculties.

Men look on creeds very much in the light of theological strait-jackets, and to fetter doctrine with formula is regarded by them as an act of injustice and impertinence. Human language, they assure us, is not adequate to express the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is presumption which merits unqualified rebuke, to suppose that man-made formulas can exhaust the mysterious doctrine of the Incarnation.

The objection is not so grave as it is high-sounding. For what is there in it which will not apply as well to the Scriptures as to the formulas which are the equivalents of Scripture? The objection based on the limits of religious thought does not press with more weight on formulated truth than on Scripture itself. But do we allow it to prevent our acceptance of the Scripture? Do we discard the knowledge which the Scripture affords because the knowledge is limited? Is our knowledge indistinct because it is partial? Must our vision be blurred because only a small portion of space falls within our horizon? Do we worship an unknown God because we know Him only in part? Do we fall back in indolent skepticism because thought is paralyzed in the attempt to mount upward from the sphere of the Revealed into the sphere of the unknown? There would be force in the objection, if the formula claimed to be an exhaustive expression of all the truth concerning the doctrine which it embodies, and if the materials for it were furnished by the mind. But it claims only to be an exhaustive expression of revealed truth, which alters the case. And, if we are compelled, as we have seen, to

resort to formula to express doctrine, and, since we do not understand what we cannot express, to deny the right to formulate is to deny the right to understand.

Let us look at the question in reference to a specific doctrine. Are we to believe that what the Scriptures say of Christ is true? Yes. Is there any presumption in predicating of Christ, without addition or subtraction, what the Scriptures say respecting Him? None. What becomes of the objection to formula, then, provided the formula fulfills the condition of being an adequate expression of the Scripture's teaching? I grant that it is legitimate to ask whether we can express the teaching of Scripture; but this, as already hinted, is equivalent to asking whether we can understand the Scripture. The formulas, when expressed, will present difficulties. The union of two wills in one Person is an insolvable difficulty; but it is inherent in the doctrine, and not the result of the formula. The fidelity of the formula is seen in the absence of an attempt to remove the difficulty by tampering with the facts.

And that these dogmas are metaphysical is not a grave objection. It is as impossible to eliminate metaphysics from Theology as it is to boil water without heating it. When a man enters on the study of the Theanthropic Person, he is, of necessity, dealing at once with psychology and metaphysics. It is the theme, and not the handling of it, which accounts for the metaphysical element. It is as difficult for those who ridicule metaphysics as it is for theologians to run from their metaphysical shadow. "God," says the Shorter Catechism, "is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." "God," says Matthew Arnold, "is a stream of tendency by which all things fulfill the law of their being. * * * * God is an enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." I leave my hearers to judge whether the definition given by

the apostle of culture is less metaphysical or less obscure than that given by the Westminster Divines.

2. THEOLOGY AS SYSTEMATIC.

Men who will tolerate the Apostles' Creed find no words in which to express their contempt for systematic theology. And I will frankly concede that between a full system and no system at all there is no logical landing-place. To affirm the necessity of systematic theology, and at the same time deplore its excess, strikes us as exceedingly weak. It is hard to have an excess of truth, and a system which is not true we can afford to dispense with altogether.

I have time only to indicate some of the leading objections to system in theology, and to present some counter arguments in its defence. Systematists wrest the Scriptures, we are told. Under the euphemism of interpreting Scripture in accordance with the analogy of faith, they read into proof texts meanings which they were never meant to bear. This is sometimes the case, and the men who do it are to blame, not systematic theology. Office-holders line their pockets with public gold, but office-holding is not to blame.

It is said, again, that systematic theology is impossible. But since systems meet us on every hand, the expression must be loosely used. If it means that systems may be more or less correct, the statement is proper. If it means that the most unexceptionable system is not free from difficulties, it is equally true. Calvinism brings into co-ordinate relations doctrines which apparently conflict, but which are certainly true. But for the systematic expression of them, we should not know so well the difficulties which beset them, and the method by which we know our ignorance is not to be despised. To know that we do not know is by no means an unimportant item of information. But physical science, too, has its staggering facts and labors under the disadvantage of incompleteness. Systems

of theology are not useless because they are not exhaustive of the questions with which they deal. But, continues the objector, the Bible is not a system. Nor does the book of nature proceed on principles of classification. The forests are not Kew gardens; fishes do not swim under the direction of Agassiz; nor do the waves roll the sea-shells on the beach with the care of a cabinet collector. Do we object, on this account, to the sciences of ichthyology, and botany? Then why object to systematic theology, when the student of the Bible does exactly in his department what the student of nature does in his?

We are told again, that it is not safe to employ logic as an instrument in theological investigation. Pressed by argument, and feeling the perplexities of their position, it is common for men to put a stop to controversy by denouncing logic. "Logically," they say, "your conclusion follows, but—" they do not abide by the conclusion. In depreciating logic, they are in the company of able men of opposite schools—Isaac Taylor* and John Henry Newman. But to quarrel with logic is to quarrel with one's eyes. For logic is the law of inference, and we must use it, or part company with most of our knowledge.

* We are not aware that theologians are in the habit of claiming for logic what Isaac Taylor in his Essay on "Logic in Theology," is at such pains to deny to it. His own conclusions, however, are enough to justify logical method in theological study, as the following sentences will show:

"In proportion as the human mind is compelled to feel its dependence upon its instrument, namely, language, it is led, irresistibly, to expect far more aid from the logical collocation of words and propositions, than these implements of thought can ever yield. Language, logically compacted in propositions, avails to give us the best possible command of the knowledge which we actually possess; but it has no power to increase that stock, even a particle. Nevertheless, the advantages derivable from a well compacted and a well commanded stock of knowledge are so great—they are so inestimable—that it becomes difficult to avoid attributing to our logical methods an efficacy which does not belong to them. We believe ourselves to have *acquired* knowledge, when in fact, we have done nothing more than bring our materials into available order. In truth, it may be granted that order is a positive gain in respect of materials of which we are likely to make no use while they lie scattered before us in confusion."

Intuition will not take us far in theology, and if you say that testimony will suffice, the testimony relied on is the testimony of Scripture, which is of unquestionable value, because the Bible is the word of God. But that it is the word of God we know by inference. The inspiration of the Scripture being an inferential doctrine, we cannot get rid of logic by the device of appealing to Scripture.

The *deductive* method in theology is to-day an object of special reprobation. And we concede that it is fair that specific scriptural evidence shall be required for the separate doctrines of our faith, and that neither blind devotion to the Fathers, nor *a priori* reasoning shall take the place of direct appeal to the Bible. We differ with the high churchman who is satisfied with a *catena* of ante-Nicene quotations, and we differ likewise with Mr. Morell, who tells us that "the advancement of theology does not depend so much upon any logical or purely inductive processes, applied to scriptural data, as upon the clearing of our religious intuitions, and the higher development of our whole religious consciousness." The way to reach a safe conclusion respecting any scriptural theme is to undertake an inductive examination of the Scriptures. Theology, in this sense, is an inductive science, and theologians employ the inductive method.* It is idle, however, to say that deduction has no legitimate place in theology. "The truths of scripture," says Canon Liddon,† "are not so many separate, unfruitful, unsuggestive dogmas," and the theologian has as good right to argue from one doctrine the truth of another, as

* "In professing to follow the method of induction, I use the phrase, as Bacon did, in a large sense, as standing for that whole mode of procedure which begins with the observation of facts, and makes its final appeal to facts, as establishing the law. But in this process there may be a deductive element; as, when we suppose that the law is so-and-so, that is, devise an hypothesis, and inquire what consequences would follow, always with the design of trying these results by facts, and adopting the alleged law only when it can stand the test."—*McCosh on the Intuitions*, p. 3, Note.

† Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of Christ, p. 441.

Leverrier had to infer from the perturbations of Uranus the existence of an unknown planet. Leverrier's prediction was fulfilled in the discovery of Neptune, and theological inferences, we allow, need the verification of scriptural proof.

"A living faith is pretty certain to draw inferences," * and so we argue, with reason, that since sin makes men helpless, new life must result from the efficiency of Divine grace ; and Scripture verifies the inference. And further, that if the sphere of efficacious grace is determined by Divine sovereignty, the salvation of God's people is due to electing love. We have thus, for the separate doctrines of scripture, the double argument of inference and direct scriptural statement. This, however, is to understate the evidential value of deductive theology. For, if it is found that the doctrines which the Bible holds in solution, when precipitated, crystallize in uniform relations, we instinctively ask : Is there no design in this ? Do not the teachings of these different books fall into organic shape because the books themselves were written for the unfolding of a Divine plan ? When I take the pieces of a dissected map and find that they will fit in a certain order and in no other, and that thus arranged the outline of the map is properly presented, I am convinced, beyond question, that they were made for each other, and that I have arranged them correctly. And so, when I find that the doctrines of the Bible answer to each other, so that if one is true, another must follow, and from the edge of one the shape of the contiguous doctrine can be predicted, and when, moreover, I discover that the separate doctrines, arranged side by side, reveal an outline of theology definite and congruous, I become stronger in my belief in all the doctrines, from the congruity of the system which they disclose, and confirmed in my belief of any single doctrine by its correlation with the rest.

* Liddon's Bampton Lectures, p. 442.

A criterion is in this way furnished for testing a theological opinion, which challenges examination. When the "moral influence" theory is presented as an adequate account of the atonement, it must run the gauntlet of doctrinal comparison; and because it is not in keeping with the doctrine of sin, of the Deity of Christ, or of regeneration, it must be rejected. For, to receive it would be to reduce system to chaos, and to necessitate the denial of every distinctive doctrine of our faith.

And who will affirm that, in these days, when error is rife, a comprehensive knowledge of Christian theology is of slight importance to the minister of Christ? By theological knowledge, however, is not meant a mere text-book acquaintance with the leading articles of our faith, but a knowledge so intimate and penetrating that the student shall see at a glance the bearing of one doctrine upon another, and, by a process shorter than formal syllogism, shall perceive the logical consequences of a heretical opinion.

But it is absurd to complain of system in theology, for theological truths are so related, that if we know a man's place in respect to one doctrine, it will not be difficult to predict his position with reference to others. Let anthropology be the starting point, and as a man judges of sin will he be constrained to judge of the atonement. Let soteriology be the point of departure, and a man's views in regard to the death of Christ will be reflected in his ideas respecting sin. This is only saying that whether a man wishes or not, he must be systematic. It is impossible for a man to continue long in possession of incompatible elements of faith. When he parts company with a doctrine, he soon loses faith in its correlatives. And the study of those writers who affect independence of system will prove that their views are marked by coherency and logical sequence. The abusers of system are systematic in their abuse.

IV. CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AS PROGRESSIVE.

An article in a late number of the *Contemporary Review* * opens with the following sentence: "It is universally admitted among reflecting men that in proportion to the growth of a cultivated reason, the dogmatic standards of past ages become less and less adequate as exhaustive charts of human belief." To deny one a place "among reflecting men," on account of his theological conservatism is, to say the least, arbitrary. The sentence is quoted, however, not for review, but as the indication of a prevailing sentiment from which we dissent. There would be no wisdom, certainly, in making our Confession of Faith the basis of theological instruction if we were ready to regard it as antiquated and unsuited to the present age; and the man who is expected to promise that he will teach nothing directly or indirectly which is contrary thereto should think twice before he consents to be fettered by a "creed outworn." It may surprise some that a man will agree to abide faithfully by a stereotyped expression of doctrine, affirming thereby that progress is a thing of which he is not sanguine, and which, indeed, he does not crave. The subject, therefore, has special relevancy in my address to-night.†

If truth is not valuable for its own sake, it is not difficult to see why men should dislike a Theology which offers no inducement for its study in the prospect of new discovery. And some men seem to think that there is in the simple idea of progress an advantage which would be missed were the sum total of theological knowledge already in possession. The imperfect condition of science, and the hope of contributing to the advancement of a particular branch of it, have a great deal to do, we are aware, with scientific enthusiasm. If all that

* Ethics of Creed Subscription.—*Contemporary Review* for August, 1872.

† This and the following division have been somewhat expanded since the address was delivered.

ever can be known of chemistry could be put in a book to-day, the students of that science would begin to labor in more prolific fields. Should scientific progress stop, scientific ardor would rapidly cool. It is a mistake, however, to value theological science only for the intellectual gratification which its study affords. Theology is the systematic expression of revealed truth. It is valuable only in the ratio that a man has confidence in it. If our interest in Theology terminates on the truth, and not on our study of the truth, there can be no doubt that to know all that can be known, is better than to be looking for fresh gains. Whether there is room for progress in Theology is the question which we are to discuss. What has been said is enough to show that the man who is expectant of no great advance in theological opinion is not necessarily to be commiserated.

The progress concerning which inquiry is to be instituted, is progress in Theology, let it be understood. It will not prove a progress in Theology to remind us that times have changed since Calvin burnt Servetus, and reformers refused to shake hands because they differed on the subject of sacramental grace. The growing harmony among Christians, and the disposition to treat each other in a more fraternal spirit, is evidence of the growth of toleration, but is not due to a convergence of doctrinal views. It is creditable to Protestantism that "a man may speak his mind without having his ears cropped," but to cite the fact, as illustrating progress in theology, would betray ignorance of the question under discussion. And the mistake would be as great if the denial of progress in theology were treated as the equivalent of that unreasonable conservatism which adheres to the old, because it is old, and which makes "use and wont" a sufficient reason for resisting a needed change. There are men in our own church who believe that our standards contain the system of truth taught in the Word of God, who nevertheless are far from believing that in the

details of work and worship there is no room for improvement. If there be any progress in theology, it must be objective or subjective ; it must refer to the receiving of new truth, or the better understanding of truth already in possession.

Objective Progress.

The Protestant position is, that the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. Progress, so far as it has reference to the receiving of religious truth on other authority than that of Scripture is anti-Protestant. It implies that the Bible is insufficient or incorrect, and is allied with Romanism, Mysticism or Rationalism.

The Roman and the Anglo Catholic agree in denying the sufficiency of Scripture and in affirming, in opposition to Protestantism, the right of tradition to add to the teachings of the Bible; with the difference, however, that the latter, by limiting the orbit of tradition to the first five centuries, saves himself from some of the difficulties which the former encounters in the attempt to prove a "general consent" in behalf of the Tridentine theology. But the Romanist is able to guarantee the traditions to which he makes his appeal by citing the infallibility of the church: an argument, indeed, which loses some of its cogency from the fact that the infallibility of the Church is invariably certified by a similar appeal to tradition. It was with the view, perhaps, of escaping from this vicious circle that Dr. Newman advocated the doctrine of development as sufficing to account for the extra-scriptural dogmas of Romanism, without the necessity of finding support for them in an unbroken tradition. If the church is infallible, however, there is no need of the theory; and if the church is not infallible, by what right does Dr. Newman claim authority for the developments in the religious consciousness of Romanism, which he would deny to other developments in the religious consciousness of Protestantism? This doctrine sets up a subjective standard of truth, and is simply Ration-

alism doing service for the Pope. It was necessary for Romanism that the Church should speak in the present and not in the past tense ; should have power to proclaim new dogmas without the necessity of quoting patristic authority in support of them. And the Vatican council has made possible an indefinite progress in theology by affirming the infallibility of the Pope.

Mysticism is in accord with Romanism in so far as it affirms the insufficiency of the Scriptures and the possibility, therefore, of acquiring theological knowledge outside of them. It is different from Rationalism too, in that the avowed authority on which this extra-scriptural knowledge is received, instead of being reason, is the Spirit of God. The faith of the Romanist terminates on what he believes the Holy Ghost has revealed to the Church ; that of the Mystic, on what he believes the Holy Ghost reveals to himself. Mysticism has affinities with Rationalism, however, in so far as it admits only a subjective standard of truth. Confident that he is the recipient of special revelation, the mystic may adhere to wrong interpretations of Scripture, or may entertain theological opinions which are not found in scripture. In fact, the opposite views of different men may each be supported by appeal to the same inspired authority. The system leads to an assertion of personal infallibility, and by the denial of an objective standard of faith to the confounding of truth and error. It is found in many forms, in connection sometimes with deep piety, and at others with open infidelity.

The Rationalist believes in progress too, for he sets up a subjective standard of truth, and instead of believing in an infallible Pope, believes in his infallible self. There are wide differences, of course, among those who have adopted a rationalizing method in theology. There are systems which preserve the nomenclature of the church, but depart widely from the

doctrines of the church, if they do not deny them entirely. And there are others which in the main adhere to the doctrines of the Bible, with an infusion, however, of Rationalistic thought. But whether men proceed by way of speculative independence of Scripture, or by a critical repudiation of it, the principle which guides them is the same, and it is neither more nor less than a denial of the supreme authority of the Bible. Between those who have modified the scripture doctrine of the Person of Christ by the influence of speculation, and those who affirm the mythical theory of Strauss, there is all the difference between Christianity and infidelity. But the principle which justifies the speculative modification is akin, nevertheless, to that which has resulted in the discredit of the gospel history. If the speculative method supersede the inductive method in theology, there will be, of course, no limit to progress, and, let us add, no test of truth.

It will appear then, that the points at issue, so far as objective progress is concerned, are the sufficiency and the inspiration of Scripture. If it is proper for men to speak flip-pantly of Paul's opinions, if it is right for them to say that Paul reasoned incorrectly, that he has presented a wrong view of doctrine, that his utterances respecting the sacrifice of Christ were colored by Jewish prejudices, of course there is room for progress in theology, and it is difficult to see where progress will stop. But to take this ground would be to deny the authority of Scripture, and throw the whole area of theology open to fruitless speculation.

Subjective Progress.

Assuming, then, the sufficiency of Scripture and its inspiration, we shall agree that, whatever progress there may be, it does not mean the inculcation of doctrines which are either extra-scriptural or unscriptural. It has reference only to a better understanding of the Scripture. And this may be due

either to a more correct text or to a better grammatical knowledge. It is safe to say that we have not much to look for from the first source. Neither Codex Sinaiticus, nor Codex Vaticanus, is likely to affect a single doctrinal conclusion. What may be looked for from the other source is the sole question on the subject of progressive theology.

If the question were asked, whether there is room for Christians to make progress in the apprehension of the doctrinal teachings of the Bible, the answer would of course be in the affirmative. For, what are sectarian differences but advertisements of sectarian ignorance? It does not follow from this, however, that a man is ready to believe that *his* creed stands in need of revision. And it is only so far as the personal application of this question is concerned, that there is any room for discussion. Instead of asking a Calvinist whether he believes in progress in theology, let us ask him whether he regards the Westminster Confession of Faith as a true exhibition of the system of doctrine taught in the word of God. Supposing that the area of the Confession is co-extensive with the doctrinal area of Scripture, for him to affirm that the Confession of Faith is true, is, by implication, to deny that he believes in progress. For progress would involve a modification of the Confession.

If a man believes that the standards of our Church teach the true doctrine of the Person of Christ, he will not believe in progress so far as Christology is concerned. And certitude concerning all the doctrines of the Confession, would be equivalent to the denial of a belief in progress. Belief in progress in theology, would imply that he had some doubts respecting one or more of the doctrinal utterances of the Confession. And his belief in progress would be measured by his incertitude.

It is plain, then, that to say that a man believes in progress in theology, is to use very vague language. For his belief in progress may cover the entire system of theology, or it may

have reference only to a single, and that a comparatively unimportant, doctrine. It may refer to an important change of opinion, or it may have reference only to a more exact and discriminating expression of a dogma. And, since belief in progress is just the measure of a man's incertitude respecting the teachings of the Confession, and may admit of indefinite degrees, it would be wrong to impute to a man revolutionary sentiments on the whole subject of theology, merely because he avowed a belief in progressive theology.

It would appear further, that if one is disposed to dispute the position which I assume, in affirming my belief in the Confession of Faith, the proper course for him to follow is to indicate the weak points in the Confession, and to say where progress may be looked for, and in what respects it is open to improvement. On *a priori* grounds no one has the right to affirm that the Confession of Faith is not true. And if it is true, we repeat it, there is no room for a progress which will necessitate a restatement of its doctrines. For one to affirm that there is room for progress in theology, he should be ready to say what doctrines he doubts or disbelieves. This would remove the discussion at once into the sphere of theological controversy, and would take away from the idea of progressive theology what constitutes, in our judgment, its most objectionable feature. For it is not surprising that a man, either through constitutional bias or because he has given some subjects less examination than they deserve, feels in doubt regarding some of the doctrines taught in our Confession of Faith, while entertaining no doubt respecting others. How many intelligent lay men there are in our body who would candidly say that they experience difficulty in receiving some of the doctrines, that of predestination, for example. This incertitude implies that there is room for them to make progress in the apprehension of doctrine; and it may go so far as to leave the impres-

sion on their mind that the Church itself has not yet reached an exhaustive statement on these subjects. In fact, it is hard to see how they can avoid the feeling that the symbols of the Church need modification to the extent, that is to say, of the doctrines about which they stand in doubt.

The matter of subjective progress, it appears, is neither more nor less than the personal one, regarding the extent to which we can give assent to the Confession of Faith. It is one of those subjects, to which Dr. Newman's aphorism: "Ego-tism is true modesty," is applicable. It is accordingly proper for me to affirm my belief that the Confession of Faith is a true exhibition of the system of doctrine taught in the Bible, and that it is so far complete, that no material modification of it is needed. In affirming this, I deny progressive theology. To justify my denial, would be to justify my affirmation,—would be to show why I believe the separate doctrines of the Confession; or, in other words, to write a system of theology. This I shall not be expected to do. Nor shall I be asked to anticipate the doubts which others may have in regard to particular doctrines, and endeavor to show that they are not well founded.

That to which I take exception in the argument of progressive theologians, is the assumption that our present creeds are necessarily inadequate.

The avowal of progressive theology on *a priori* grounds is open to objection. In the first place, because it is arbitrary and high-handed for men to assert that doctrines, for which ample evidence is presented, are untrue, without being at the pains to examine the evidence. This mode of proceeding stultifies all reasoning, and destroys the value of testimony. It is open to objection, moreover, because it is a mode of reasoning which, if allowed in the case of one doctrine, should by

rights be allowed in reference to every doctrine, and which tends, therefore, to reduce us to a state of utter skepticism.

These reasons will be presented more fully in connection with a review of the leading arguments in favor of progressive theology.

It is said that the Confessions of one age are not suited to the wants of a succeeding age. But men who employ this language forget that a creed is not like a coat, made to fit the wearer and accommodate his taste. The question is whether the creed ever was the equivalent of Scripture. If it was when it was made, it is not less so to-day. For the idea of a creed is not that it shall represent human opinions respecting a doctrine, but that it shall reflect the teaching of the Bible. The question is not whether a creed suits men, but whether it is true to the Scripture. If it was a thousand years ago, it is not less so now. For, unlike the fashion of this world, which passeth away, Truth is immutable and immortal. If the principle were allowed, which the writer in the Contemporary Review has stated, to wit, "that it is impossible for any creed to continue adequate from age to age;" it would follow that we never could say *credo* to any formulated system of doctrine. It would be impossible to believe that to be true which at the same time we believed to be liable to indefinite modification. A *creed*, in the strict sense of the word, would be out of the question. We should have but little encouragement to proceed with the work of improving our Confession; there would be no hope of reaching a final opinion, and we should have the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that Christians, a century hence, will find the creeds of to-day, as antiquated as some now regard those which they wish to reconstruct. For the principle which underlies the reasoning of progressive theologians, is that, of necessity, creeds are only tentative. This argument is used sometimes by men who would be very unwilling to

carry it to its logical results. But, if it is not reasonable to suppose that a set of men in the seventeenth century could make a creed which will meet the wants of the nineteenth century, by parity of reasoning, may we not argue that it is not likely that a set of men in the third century would succeed any better? Let us affirm our expectation of progress in theology, not on the ground of any doubt respecting a particular doctrine, or for the reason that we suppose that the Scripture lends it little or no support, but on the general principle that the creeds of the past are unsuited to the wants of the present. Then what is to prevent us from supposing that it may turn out that men have been mistaken in believing Jesus to be God; that in fact, they have been worshipping the creature rather than the Creator? Is it possible for us to entertain a doubt respecting this doctrine, and at the same time rely on Jesus as our Saviour? We should think not, since the idea would involve the palpable contradiction of believing at the same time that He is God, and yet that He may not be God. If I affirm the sentiment quoted a little ago, my belief becomes a provisional belief, my Saviour a provisional Saviour, and my confidence a provisional confidence, which at any moment may be destroyed.

We are reminded, in defence of progressive theology, that there has been progress in other departments; that the physical sciences do not claim to be complete; and we are asked why theology should claim to be an exception. Yes, we shall be told that even the Church at last has grown liberal enough to accept the facts of astronomy, that the doctrine which nearly cost Galileo his life, is a school-room common place; that what it was then infidelity to affirm, it is now insanity to deny. But the advance in physical science is due to constant increase of scientific materials. Old theories are proved false in the presence of new facts, and new theories are only tenta-

tive because based on a partial survey of facts. But we are not dealing with a science in which a text-book becomes worthless before it is worn out, and new facts are forcing men to a re-consideration of their theories. With all the facts of the science in so small a compass, it ought not to be regarded as antecedently improbable, that by this time some have reached definite and accurate conclusions respecting them. Still, you will admit, continues the objector, that the Church has made progress in the apprehension of doctrine. Why, then, do you suppose that progress has been arrested; why may there not be room for progress now, as there was when the Reformed Confessions were made? The Nicene age marks one advance; Augustine another; the Reformation constitutes an epoch, and the Reformed Confessions are monuments of theological progress. Why are we to conclude that theology has come to a stand-still? We answer: If it be conceded that the Reformed Confessions mark an advance in theological knowledge, it must be admitted that they have lessened the area of ill-understood doctrine, and it is possible that they so thoroughly discuss the subjects with which they deal as to leave no room for a new line of thought which does not contradict the positions taken by the Reformed theologians.

If any theological topics have been left unhandled, of course they may be regarded as furnishing a fine field for theological investigations. But these topics are certainly very few. And if progress in any great degree is to be expected, it must be by upsetting the conclusions already reached. Is there any antecedent probability that we who have no more facts, and no better brains than the Reformers had, are likely to reach more trust-worthy conclusions? This is a sufficient reply to those who think that because there has been progress in the past, there must continue to be progress in the future, though it is not the argument by which we maintain the position we have

taken. We do not believe the Confession, because of an antecedent unlikelihood that the Reformers were wrong. On the contrary, our great respect for them is the result of our conviction that the confessions they framed are so complete, and so conformable to the Scripture.

But, in face of the wide differences which separate Protestant denominations, is it not bigotry and narrow-mindedness to affirm that Calvinism has reached ultimate conclusions in the interpretation of Scripture? Is it not, in a word, arrogating infallibility, to affirm that a single type of theological opinion represents the true doctrine of Scripture? With some minds, questions like these would have a great deal of force. And though it may seem arrogant, at first sight, to take the position which we do, yet, on closer study of the question, it will not be so regarded. That twelve clocks, my own among them, indicate, at the same moment, a different hour of the day, does not prove that they are all wrong, though they all may be wrong. And the system of Calvinism is not proved to be wrong in the simple fact that it is surrounded by opposing systems. Whether it is right or wrong, depends on the evidence by which it is supported. If there were no evidence for it, it would not be worthy of belief, even though no competing systems were in the field. And if it is attested, the presence of other systems cannot justly prevent me from giving my assent to it. I surely have the right, without being charged with bigotry, to say whether I believe that the system of our Confession is taught in the Bible. And believing, by force of testimony, that it is taught there, surely I shall not be asked, even for the sake of peace, and to avoid the imputation of narrowness, to contradict myself to the extent of saying that I believe that the Confession is false, when the whole tenor of Scripture teaches me that it is true.

But may not the differences which divide Protestantism find

their solution in a higher and as yet unrevealed unity? This again, begs the very question in dispute. I cannot believe this, if I believe the Confession of Faith to be a true representation of the Scripture. And this, as already remarked, cannot be determined on *a priori* grounds. If Calvinism is true, Arminianism is false. If the Baptists are right, Paedobaptists are wrong. The positions, represented by these names, being contradictory, we are shut up to one or the other of them.

We do not look for a full agreement in doctrine among Christians. But believing in Calvinism, we believe that if Christendom shall ever have a unanimous faith, it will be a Calvinistic faith, which was the faith of Augustine, which was the faith of Paul. And it is worthy of notice that men who have no special leaning towards our doctrinal system, do not hesitate to avow that it is found in the Bible. "If Arminianism most commends itself to our feelings," says Mr. Froude, "Calvinism is nearer to the facts." And Matthew Arnold, though he has no respect for Paul's theology, admits that Calvinism is wrapped up in his "harsh and unedifying image of the clay and the potter."

In discussing the question of subjective progress in theology, we have been led to affirm belief in the Calvinistic system,—the question, as I have repeatedly said, being purely a personal one, and the denial of progress implying a belief in a particular system of doctrine as truly representative of the word of God. But the Calvinist is not the only one interested in the denial of a progress in theology which finds its support in *a priori* considerations respecting the adequateness of ancient creeds; for these considerations, as we have seen, jeopard even the doctrine of the Deity of Christ.

V. CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AS SYMBOLICAL.

It is a matter of great importance to the private Christian to have definite opinions respecting the teachings of God's

word. And were there no visible organization called the Church; were Christianity to resolve itself into out and out Individualism, systematic theology would continue to be a subject of great value to the diligent student of the Bible.

The fact, however, that theology is alike the badge of denominational distinction, and the bond of Christian fellowship is a reason why I should call attention to two other questions which are of present interest.

The first is the right of Sectarianism to exist at all, and the second is the relation of theology to ministerial and Christian fellowship.

Theology and Sectarianism.

Theology is the basis of organic unity in Christendom. The divisions of Christendom have been justified on theological grounds. Theological differences separated the Eastern and Western churches; they gave rise to the Reformation, and they subsequently divided Protestants. The separate denominations are held together by their theological agreements. In some instances the theology is expressed in a written form or symbol, in others as in Romanism and Anglicanism in a living organization. The unity of the Papacy expresses itself in the dogma *ubi Petrus ibi ecclesia*; the unity of Anglicanism in the sentiment that the church is a community of Christians "episcopally officered."

Theology must enter into the conditions of Church union, whether the union be more or less extensive. And it cannot but be a matter of regret that Christians have so far differed in their interpretations of the Bible as to justify so many independent organizations. Nor does it remove the occasion of this regret to be reminded of the good effects which grow out of generous sectarian emulation or to be told that denominationalism is a wise anticipation of the wants of different types of mind. For the divisions are the result of difference of

theological opinion, and show plainly that some at all events are greatly in the wrong, since if all were in the right there would be no disagreement. It is not the organic division which we regret so much, as it is the doctrinal disagreement of which it is the exponent. If other elements did not enter into the discussion we could readily affirm that Catholicity is preferable to Sectarianism, and that the Church should bend its energies in the direction of a restored unity. The other elements which enter into the case make the subject one of difficulty. That the question is exciting attention one can see by watching the religious periodicals. Dean Stanley and Dr Pusey the poles apart on most theological questions, are both anxious for the reunion of Christendom, the former on the narrow basis of apostolic succession, and the latter on the broad principle of comprehension. And the positions taken by the two men may fairly represent the only reasonable modes of advocating a reunion of Christendom: a man must, in other words, hope for it on the ground that all Christians will come round to his way of thinking, or that they will agree to tolerate very wide theological differences. There are few who look for reunion on the basis of unanimity. The "Old Catholic" movement is not likely to solve the Sectarian problem. And it is to comprehension we must look, if any where, for the consummation which by many is devoutly wished for. The denominational difficulty grows out of the attempt to unite the two ideas of organic unity and doctrinal completeness. If organic unity were the only essential, wide divergences of belief could be tolerated. If organic life were not important Christianity might run into individualism. When the break with Rome occurred the doctrine was *ipso facto* announced that organic unity was not essential. It is not strange that Protestantism became Sectarian. For if men might protest against Rome, and make two denominations, why might not

Protestants protest against each other and make ten. If we protest against Rome for teaching too much, we shall naturally separate from Unitarians who teach too little.

Since organic unity is not essential, any proposition to unite the sects on a basis of comprehension must answer the question whether the change will be attended with a gain greater than the loss. For it is needless to say there is some advantage in the present state of things which Broad-churchism would not possess.

The comprehension scheme requires, first of all, the giving up, on the part of Christians, of their ideas on church polity. For as long as Prelacy, Presbyterianism and Congregationalism are conscientiously defended, on Scriptural grounds, Sectarianism will hold its own. The principle suggests a difficulty at the outset, of whose speedy removal we see no tokens. Then the principle of comprehension, in order to carry out the designs of those who advocate it, ought to admit to Christian fellowship all who are Christians. How are we to determine exactly who are Christians? What is the *minimum* of doctrine which will be considered necessary for Christian fellowship? At first sight, the movement would indicate a great advance in Christian charity. But, on closer examination, we shall find that this is not the case. For it is far less invidious to have a long creed which is not *intended* to include all Christians, than a short one, which puts upon those who exclude men from Christian fellowship the responsibility of saying they are not Christians at all.

But, suppose that the principle of comprehension should go into effect, what would be the result? Organic action on the part of Christians at large, would be out of the question. They might agree in observing the week of prayer; they might come to a better understanding respecting the distribution of missionary work; they might pour their united offerings into a

common treasury. But they can do that now, and to a great extent are doing it. The work of the Church would necessarily be entrusted to local agencies ; and the only difference, so far as polity is concerned, would be that the denominations would be separated by geographical boundaries, rather than by distinctions of creed. The Presbyterian Church, the Methodist church, and the Episcopal church would die, and in their place we should have the Church of New York, the Church of Philadelphia, the Church of Chicago, &c. Suppose this denominational fusion should take place, what great gain, or what important difference would result? The Baptist would pass the church which believes in infant baptism, to wait on the ministry of one who believes that immersion is the only mode, and that believers are the only subjects, of baptism. The Arminian would rather walk a mile than worship next door with a Calvinistic congregation. In a word, the principle of elective affinity would still control the relations of pastor and people, and we should be just where we were before, with the difference that we should have parted company with much that was dear and valued ; we should miss the sympathy which exists between sharers of a common faith ; we should lack the stimulus which is given to Christian enterprise by national denominationalism ; we should foster indifference to doctrinal truth ; and the world would lose the value of the separate lessons which the denominations teach. The world is in more need of Calvinism than of Comprehension ; and until we all come to the unity of the faith, sectarianism will be at once the reproach and the redemption of Protestant Christianity. "Looking around, then,"* says Mr. Curteis, "what schemes are at the present moment presented to our choice, whereby the effort shall be made to organize Teutonic

* Dissent in its relation to the Church of England. Bampton Lectures for 1871. Preface, p. xiv.

Christendom? Two only are in view; and they are these—(1) the scheme of 'the Evangelical alliance,'—(2) the scheme of the 'old Catholic church.' " Which is an Anglican's way of saying: we must agree, and so be one; or, we must agree to differ, and so co-operate.

Let Christians learn, then, to soften the asperities of controversy; to recognize the brotherly relations subsisting among the sects; and then, in a spirit of preference which does not exalt itself into exclusiveness, and of emulation which does not run into rivalry, let them go side by side across prairies, and over mountains and up rivers, and through cities, carrying the same glad message of redeeming love.

We shall be told that the argument which justifies ten denominations, will justify a hundred; that there is no logical termination to the disintegrating process; that if Calvinists may separate from Arminians because they differ on the question concerning the ground of election, the most minute shades of Calvinistic opinions may be made the ground of as many Calvinistic denominations. There is force in the argument, we cannot deny, and it is too well illustrated in the different groups into which Presbyterianism is broken up.

Still, there is a centripetal force in Christianity which tends to correct the evils of excessive division. There is a desire for solidarity which will, in all likelihood, keep the denominations compact and insure the "permanence of species." Our church is made compact by her polity and her doctrine. The three principles of Presbyterianism, parity of the ministry, popular government, and organic unity, give us a polity sufficiently flexible and sufficiently centralized. Our theology is distinct and exclusive. Depravity, expiation, justification by faith, regeneration and sovereign election, sum up Calvinism and make it a theologic species. It does not destroy our specific oneness to vary, within limits, in our statements of these

doctrines. Whether a man explains depravity by realism or federal-headship, or whether he puts the decree of election before or after the decree of atonement, does not affect vitally his position in the Calvinistic species. Our Church has one theology, and he is untrue to the Church who seeks to give specific value to what is not a specific doctrine. At Princeton, at Union, at Auburn, at Allegheny, at Lane, at Chicago, at San Francisco, one theology is taught,—a theology which, crystallizing round the admitted fact of man's depraved nature, finds expression in the correlated doctrines of election, Incarnation, vicarious atonement, regeneration, justification, sanctification. Men may call it ante-diluvian, if they please; no offence will be given to those who believe that the scheme of redemption dates with the eternal purpose of God, that the voice of mercy synchronized with the voice of justice, and that the first promise of offspring was associated with the promise of a Redeemer.

Theology and Fellowship.

The Westminster confession is our Presbyterian symbol. This, however, is not saying, that subscription to it is the condition of Christian fellowship. The Church Session is the door of entrance to full communion, and our standards wisely leave the matter of individual membership to the discretion of the minister and the elders. No rule applicable alike in all cases can be given, respecting the amount of knowledge which shall be required of the applicant for admission to the Lord's table. Nor would it be consistent for a symbol which proceeds upon the assumption that the children of believing parents are members of the Church, and which encourages the early profession of faith, to require, as a condition of full communion, the explicit avowal of all the doctrines of the Confession. In this respect our church exhibits a liberality, more real and more reasonable than is manifested

by those churches which make the public avowal of an elaborate creed, the prelude to Christian communion. The church is the school where the doctrines are to be taught, and a faithful ministry will reveal itself in careful pulpit instruction. The condition of Christian discipleship is faith in Jesus Christ, and it is not right that the disciple should be kept from the table of his Lord, until his education is far enough advanced to enable him to give an intelligent assent to all the doctrines of the Confession.

The official instructor of the people should be required to avow his faith in the standards which he is expected to teach. Ignorance of the doctrinal teachings of our standards is inexcusable in the case of one who, in his ordination vows, affirms that he "sincerely receives and adopts the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." Nor is it quite becoming for men to take advantage of their position to speak with contempt or in disparagement of the doctrinal system which they are supposed to accept.*

The Church has the right to guard against the teaching of error in her pulpits. And the ingenious writer in the *Contemporary Review* who has already been quoted, fails in his attempt to justify the holding in an esoteric way of doctrines which are not in accordance with the standards of the Church of which he is a minister. "The ethics of creed-subscription," imply that the minister who avows his adherence to the standards of the Church does so in good faith, and when he finds

*An article in the December number of the *Contemporary Review*, entitled "The Westminster Confession and Scotch Theology," is an indication of a tendency to Broad-churchism in Scotland, though it is restricted in the main, we believe, to a coterie of ministers in the Establishment among whom are Dr. Wallace and Principal Tulloch. The writer in the *Contemporary* is strongly in favor of a revision of the Confession, and his favorite argument is the familiar one, that a Confession, framed so long ago, is unsuited to the wants of the present age.

himself out of sympathy with them, there should be little doubt as to the course which ethical propriety would suggest.

And since the relation between theology and religion is so intimate, to teach theology to those who are to be preachers of the truth in this great Northwest, is a work of incalculable importance and of grave responsibility. This is the work which you have called me to do. I come then to read the standards with my own eyes, to teach them according to my own method, and it will be for you who are the guardians of this Seminary, and for the General Assembly of our Church to say whether I am faithful. I entered the ministry when the parted waters of American Presbyterianism were so near their point of junction that I belong far more to the Presbyterianism of to-day than to any antecedent Presbyterianism; and I come to my present post with the deep conviction that these waters, (unlike the streams of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence, where the blackness of the one and the brightness of the other preserve the individuality of each,) not only flow in the same channel, but have lost their identity in that greater stream which their union makes. I desire, as best I may, to serve our beloved Church in discharging the duties of the position to which I have been called. And may God, for Christ's sake, equip me for the work He has given me to do.

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